

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3506

SECDEF WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 7201

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IS

SUBJECT: RABIN'S MEETING WITH DEFENSE DEPUTY SECRETARY CLEMENTS

1. DURING HIS VISIT TO ISRAEL DEPUTY DEFENSE SECRETARY CLEMENTS MET WITH PRIME MINISTER RABIN. THE PRIME MINISTER DEALT ONLY BRIEFLY WITH DEFENSE SUBJECTS AND CONCENTRATED ON A REVIEW OF THE PRESENT SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST. HE SAID THAT ISRAEL HAS TAKEN CERTAIN STEPS WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED STATES WHICH HAVE LED TO THE INTERIM AGREEMENT. THIS HAS PROVEN AN EFFECTIVE AGREEMENT FROM THE ISRAELI AND THE UNITED STATES' POINT OF VIEW.

2. AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT IS NOT ATTAINABLE IN THE NEAR FUTURE. THERE IS NO STABILITY IN ANY ARAB COUNTRY EXCEPT THAT WHICH IS MAINTAINED BY FORCE. THERE IS NO CHANGE EXCEPT THAT WHICH IS BROUGHT ABOUT BY A COUP D'ETAT. THERE IS A BUILT IN SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL INSTABILITY IN ARAB COUNTRIES AND A PEACEFUL MIDDLE EAST MUST AWAIT A TRANSITION IN ARAB SOCIETY. PREVIOUS DECISIONS BY ARAB LEADERS REGARDING FEDERATIONS HAVE COME TO NOTHING. ANY AGREEMENT REACHED TODAY AT RIYADH WILL BE FORGOTTEN TOMORROW. ARAB INSTABILITY PLUS THE DEEP EMOTION ON THE ARAB-ISRAELI ISSUES MAKES FULL
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PEACE JUST A DREAM.

3. ISRAEL MUST STATE ITS POSITION AND BE READY TO EXPLORE POSSIBILITIES, BUT AS LONG AS FULL PEACE CANNOT BE ACHIEVED IT SHOULD CONTINUE ON ITS PATH OF INTERIM AGREEMENTS WHICH IT HAS HAD THE LAST 29 YEARS. AFTER THE 1956 WAR THERE WAS AN INTERIM AGREEMENT SITUATION WITHOUT ANY AGREEMENT BECAUSE OF THE TERMS DICTATED BY THE SUPERPOWERS. AFTER THE 1967 WAR THERE WAS ANOTHER INTERIM ARRANGEMENT. AFTER THE 1973 WAR THERE WERE THE DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENTS OF 1974 AND SINAI-II OF 1975. IT THUS APPEARS THAT THE ARAB WORLD IS MORE SUITED TO INTERIM AGREEMENTS THAN OVERALL NEGOTIATIONS AND THIS SITUATION HAS BROUGHT RISKS AND ADVANTAGES. SINAI-II HAS GIVEN A PUSH TO THE PROCESS WHICH CAN HELP BRING ABOUT BETTER DOMESTIC CONDITIONS IN EGYPT, BETTER RELATIONS BETWEEN THE ARAB COUNTRIES, AND BETTER RELATIONS BETWEEN THE ARABS AND THE UNITED STATES.

4. BASIC ISRAELI POLICY IS TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY OF IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS WITH ARAB COUNTRIES AND TO MOVE TOWARD PEACE, INCLUDING A POSSIBLE RECONVENING OF THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE CONFERENCE. IF A MOVE TOWARD PEACE IS NOT POSSIBLE, ISRAEL IS READY TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY OF NEGOTIATIONS FOR AN END TO THE STATE OF WAR. IF ANY ARAB LEADER WISHES THOSE NEGOTIATIONS, ISRAEL WILL BE READY. THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT IS AGREED THAT NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD GO FORWARD ON WHICHEVER OF THESE POSSIBILITIES PROVES VIABLE. HE COMMENTED THAT EVERY NEGOTIATION IS A BARGAINING AND A COMPROMISE MUST BE FOUND WHICH IS ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH SIDES.

5. RABIN SAID HE HOPED THAT THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT IN 1977 WILL NOT BE TOO EAGER TO TAKE DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVES AND WILL REFLECT ON THE ACHIEVEMENTS WHICH ISRAEL AND THE UNITED STATES HAVE BROUGHT ABOUT SINCE THE 1973 WAR. THE UNITED STATES SHOULD ENCOURAGE THE TRENDS WHICH HAVE BEGUN TO BE APPARENT IN THE ARAB WORLD. THIS IS WHAT ISRAEL PERCEIVES TO BE THE BEST WAY FOR IT TO PROCEED AND HE HOPES THERE IS NO MISUNDERSTANDING WITH THE UNITED STATES.

6. RABIN FEELS THAT ISRAEL HAS TIME AND COMMENTED THAT
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EAGERNESS IS THE WORST TRAIT THAT A NEGOTIATOR CAN HAVE. HE SAID ISRAEL HAS INFORMATION THAT EGYPT IS READY TO EXTEND THE UNEF MANDATE WHICH MUST BE APPROVED BY THE SECURITY COUNCIL BY OCTOBER 24. HE SAID HE BELIEVED THE SYRIANS WOULD PLAY THEIR USUAL GAMES AT THE END OF NOVEMBER BUT THEY TOO ARE READY TO EXTEND THE UNDOF MANDATE. HE SAID ISRAEL AND THE UNITED STATES MUST BE COOLER AND MUST APPEAR LESS EAGER TO SHOW IMMEDIATE ACHIEVEMENTS.

7. THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT THE SITUATION FIVE YEARS
AGO IN LEBANON WAS BETTER FOR ISRAEL THAN WHATEVER
THE OUTCOME OF THE PRESENT STRUGGLE. HE SEES TWO POSSIBLE
RESULTS ARISING IN LEBANON: A COMPLETE MOSLEM TAKEOVER
OR THE EXERCISE OF MORE SYRIAN INFLUENCE. OF THESE TWO,
THE SECOND IS PREFERABLE TO ISRAEL ALTHOUGH HE MUST REMAIN
AWARE THAT THERE MAY BE MORE THAN THESE TWO POSSIBLE RESULTS.

8. HE NOTED THAT PRESENT INFORMATION IS THAT 3-4,000
IRAQIS ARE IN LEBANON AND THIS IS PROBABLY NOT THE END OF
THE IRAQI TROOP MOVEMENTS. HE SAID THE IRAQI-SYRIAN
TENSION HAS NOW BEEN REDUCED AND THE IRAQI UNITS ARE STARTING
TO RETURN TO THEIR BASES. HE NOTED THE RECENT REPORTS FROM
RIYADH OF THE 30,000 MAN INTER-ARAB PEACE FORCE AND THE
REPORTS THAT THE CHRISTIANS WILL BE REQUIRED TO WITHDRAW TO
THEIR PREVIOUS AREAS OF INFLUENCE. HE WONDERED WHETHER THE
SYRIANS WOULD MOVE AGAINST THE CHRISTIANS TO ENFORCE THIS
POINT AND SAID THIS IS TYPICAL OF THE MANY UNANSWERED
QUESTIONS IN THE LEBANESE SITUATION.
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